

CLAIMS

1. A computer-implemented method for updating software in a client environment, the method comprising:

5 receiving update information in the client environment, the update information identifying one or more available software products;

executing update instructions in the client environment to identify one or more of the available software products as suitable for the client environment;

receiving in the client environment an input selecting one or more of the identified suitable software products;

10 retrieving the selected software products to the client environment; and

installing the retrieved software products in the client environment.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

15 executing update instructions in the client environment to identify suitable software products includes executing instructions to evaluate the client environment.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein:

evaluating the client environment includes identifying software or hardware installed in the client environment.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

20 determining in the client environment when to request update information.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein:

the update instructions include scheduling instructions; and

determining in the client environment when to request update information includes executing one or more of the scheduling instructions.

25 6. The method of claim 2, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify suitable software products includes

executing instructions to interpret the update information identifying the available software products.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein:

interpreting the update information includes determining whether new update
5 instructions are required for processing the available software products; and

if new update instructions are required, identifying suitable software products
includes retrieving and executing the new update instructions in the client
environment.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein:

10 receiving an input selecting one or more of the suitable software products
includes receiving user input selecting one or more of the suitable software products.

9. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the available software products include one or more available software
updates; and

15 executing update instructions in the client environment to identify suitable
software products includes executing update instructions to identify one or more of
the available software updates as suitable for software in the client environment.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein:

20 receiving update information in the client environment includes receiving
information indicating a version number and/or dates of last modification of each
available software update.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein:

25 executing update instructions to identify suitable updates includes executing
instructions to identify updates of a software product installed in the client
environment.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein:

executing the instructions to identify updates of the installed software product includes executing instructions to identify updates that add optional components to the installed software product.

5 13. The method of claim 11, wherein:

the installed software product has a first version number; and

executing the instructions to identify updates of the installed software product includes executing instructions to identify updates that are operable to update the installed software product from the first to a second version number.

10 14. The method of claim 9, wherein:

the update instructions are executed in the client environment by an updater application associated with one or more software products installed in the client environment; and

executing update instructions to identify suitable updates includes executing update instructions to identify suitable updates that are unrelated to the software products associated with the updater application.

15 15. The method of claim 9, wherein:

retrieving the selected software updates includes executing update instructions to identify installers for the selected software updates and retrieving the identified installers; and

installing the retrieved software updates includes using the retrieved installers to install the retrieved software updates.

20 16. The method of claim 15, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify installers includes executing instructions to identify a sequence of two or more installers for updating a software product; and

using the retrieved installers includes executing the two or more installer

applications for updating the software product in an order defined by the identified sequence.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify installers includes executing
5 instructions to identify dependencies between installer applications for updating the software product.

18. The method of claim 2, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify suitable software products includes
executing instructions to specify a user interface for updating software in the client
10 environment.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

presenting a representation of at least a portion of the update information to a user in the specified user interface.

20. The method of claim 2, wherein:

15 retrieving the selected software products includes retrieving the selected software products as digitally signed data.

21. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving one or more update instructions in the client environment.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein:

20 receiving update instructions includes receiving update instructions as digitally signed data.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein:

receiving update instructions or update information in the update client includes receiving data from one or more stateless file servers.

24. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

caching the update instructions.

25. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the update instructions are specified in a platform independent form.

5 26. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the update instructions are specified in an interpreted computer language.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein:

the interpreted computer language is JavaScript or VBScript.

28. A computer-implemented method for updating software in a client environment, the
10 method comprising:

receiving a software update for a software product in a client environment, the
software update including a sequence of installer applications for updating the
software product from an earlier version to a new version according to the software
update; and

15 executing the installer applications in an order defined by the sequence to
update the software product from the earlier version through one or more intermediate
versions to the new version in the client environment.

29. A software product, tangibly embodied in a machine-readable medium, for updating
software in a client environment, the software product comprising instructions
20 operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations
comprising:

receiving update information in the client environment, the update information
identifying one or more available software products;

executing update instructions in the client environment to identify one or more
of the available software products as suitable for the client environment;

receiving in the client environment an input selecting one or more of the

- identified suitable software products;
retrieving the selected software products to the client environment; and
installing the retrieved software products in the client environment.
30. The software product of claim 29, wherein:
executing update instructions in the client environment to identify suitable software products includes executing instructions to evaluate the client environment.
31. The software product of claim 30, wherein:
evaluating the client environment includes identifying software or hardware installed in the client environment.
- 10 32. The software product of claim 30, further comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:
determining in the client environment when to request update information.
33. The software product of claim 32, wherein:
the update instructions include scheduling instructions; and
15 determining in the client environment when to request update information includes executing one or more of the scheduling instructions.
34. The software product of claim 30, wherein:
executing update instructions to identify suitable software products includes executing instructions to interpret the update information identifying the available software products.
- 20 35. The software product of claim 34, wherein:
interpreting the update information includes determining whether new update instructions are required for processing the available software products; and
if new update instructions are required, identifying suitable software products includes retrieving and executing the new update instructions in the client

environment.

36. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

receiving an input selecting one or more of the suitable software products includes receiving user input selecting one or more of the suitable software products.

5 37. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

the available software products include one or more available software updates; and

executing update instructions in the client environment to identify suitable software products includes executing update instructions to identify one or more of the available software updates as suitable for software in the client environment.

10 38. The software product of claim 37, wherein:

receiving update information in the client environment includes receiving information indicating a version number and/or dates of last modification of each available software update.

15 39. The software product of claim 37, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify suitable updates includes executing instructions to identify updates of a software product installed in the client environment.

40. The software product of claim 39, wherein:

20 executing the instructions to identify updates of the installed software product includes executing instructions to identify updates that add optional components to the installed software product.

41. The software product of claim 39, wherein:

the installed software product has a first version number; and

25 executing the instructions to identify updates of the installed software product

includes executing instructions to identify updates that are operable to update the installed software product from the first to a second version number.

42. The software product of claim 39, wherein:

the update instructions are executed in the client environment by an updater application associated with one or more software products installed in the client environment; and

executing update instructions to identify suitable updates includes executing update instructions to identify suitable updates that are unrelated to the software products associated with the updater application.

10 43. The software product of claim 37, wherein:

retrieving the selected software updates includes executing update instructions to identify installers for the selected software updates and retrieving the identified installers; and

15 installing the retrieved software updates includes using the retrieved installers to install the retrieved software updates.

44. The software product of claim 43, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify installers includes executing instructions to identify a sequence of two or more installers for updating a software product; and

20 using the retrieved installers includes executing the two or more installer applications for updating the software product in an order defined by the identified sequence.

45. The software product of claim 44, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify installers includes executing instructions to identify dependencies between installer applications for updating the software product.

46. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

executing update instructions to identify suitable software products includes executing instructions to specify a user interface for updating software in the client environment.

5 47. The software product of claim 46, further comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

presenting a representation of at least a portion of the update information to a user in the specified user interface.

48. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

10 retrieving the selected software products includes retrieving the selected software products as digitally signed data.

49. The software product of claim 30, further comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

receiving one or more update instructions in the client environment.

15 50. The software product of claim 49, wherein:

receiving update instructions includes receiving update instructions as digitally signed data.

51. The software product of claim 49, wherein:

20 receiving update instructions or update information in the update client includes receiving data from one or more stateless file servers.

52. The software product of claim 30, further comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

caching the update instructions.

53. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

the update instructions are specified in a platform independent form.

54. The software product of claim 30, wherein:

the update instructions are specified in an interpreted computer language.

55. The software product of claim 54, wherein:

the interpreted computer language is JavaScript or VBScript.

56. A software product, tangibly embodied in a machine-readable medium, for updating software in a client environment, the software product comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

10 receiving a software update for a software product in a client environment, the software update including a sequence of installer applications for updating the software product from an earlier version to a new version according to the software update; and

15 executing the installer applications in an order defined by the sequence to update the software product from the earlier version through one or more intermediate versions to the new version in the client environment.